(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken to safeguard India's Interest in the Seattle Conference on WTO held in the end of November, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The inference in the newspaper article 'India faces isolation with regard to WTO Conference", does not appear to be based on an entirely correct appreciation of facts.

(c) Government's preparations to safeguard India's interest at the Seattle Ministerial Conference included building up of a national consensus on a proactive agenda through consultations with major stake holders. Intensive consultations were also undertaken with other developing countreis so as to evolve issue based support. India participated effectively in the deliberations of the Seattle Ministerial Conference. On many issues, India received the support of a number of developing countries at the meeting. We also effectively opposed the inclusion of non-trade issues, like labour standards, in the agenda of the WTO.

Special incentives under new Industrial Policy for NER

1880. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of notified special incentives under new Industrial Policy to attract investment in the North-East Region;

(b) the response so far received on the basis of such notification;

(c) whether it is a fact some unwilling industrial houses are putting pressure to undermine the special relief for the NE region to safeguard their own self-interest; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) The particulars of incentives under the new industrial policy for the North-East Region, *inter alia*, are:

1. Expenditure on each Growth Centre, upto Rs. 15 crores to be met through Central assistance.

2. Funding pattern for Integrated Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDCs) changed from 2:3 between Government of India and SIDBI to now 4:1. The Government of India funds would be in the nature of grant.

3. Transport subsidy scheme has been extended by 7 years upto 31.3.2007 and the amount is to be disbursed through North-Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited.

4. Industries located in the Growth Centres would be given capital investment subsiby at the rate of 15% of their investment in plant & machinery subject to a ceiling of Rs. 30 lakh.

5. Growth Centres & IIDCs become tax-free zones for income tax and excise duty for a period of 10 years. Certain high growth potential industries have also been given the tax-free status irrespective of the location in the North-East.

6. An interest subsidy of 3% on the working capital loans would be provided for a priod of ten years to the new units.

7. Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for new industrial units has been put in place.

8. The Prime Ministers Rozgar Yojna (PMRY) liberalized.

(b) The Government doesn't monitor industrial investment in response to specific policy package.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Not applicable in view of answer in (c) above.

Product Patents Legislation

1881. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new legislation to provide for product patents in India is on the anvil;

(b) if so, the cardinal features of the proposed legislation;

(c) whether Government are aware that the introduction of product patents would be detrimental to the Indian Industries vis-a-vis the Multi-national Companies;

(d) if so, the steps proposed to safeguard the farmers;